Central American NEWSLETTER

Newsletter of the Central American Group of the Spanish Main Society.
Editor: Michael P. Birks, 36 Trevor Road, Flixton, Manchester M41 5QH. England. 0161 747 5924.

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The Central American Group is a part of the Spanish Main Philatelic Society, the leading Society in the world for collectors of Latin America. The journal of the SMPS is *The Mainsheet*, published quarterly, and is free with your subscription. The Secretary is Brian Moorhouse, PO Box 105, Peterborough PE3 8TQ, England. Phone 01733 2687078. The subscription is currently £8 in Europe or $20 elsewhere. Cheques in sterling or US$ should be made payable to "The Spanish Main". A three year subscription of £21/$54 and a five year subscription of £30/$80 are available and payment for these longer subscriptions may be made by Access, Mastercard or Visa. The minimum subscription is one year. If joining during the course of the year the appropriate part subscriptions should be added - Feb-Apr £6/$15; May-Aug £4/$10; Sep-Nov £2/$5 to pay through to the following January when the subscription paid will come into effect.

The Central American Group caters for the collectors of Mexico to Panama. Its journal, which you are now reading, is published quarterly, and is available by annual subscription. The subscription is currently £8/$15 resident in the UK or in Europe, or £11/$19 elsewhere. The minimum subscription is one year. If joining after June 1st, add 50% to pay through to the following January when the subscription paid will come into effect. Cheques in sterling payable to "The CA Group" should be sent to the treasurer, David Hankey, 2 Prince's Drive, Marple, Stockport SK6 6NJ, England. Phone 0161-449 0693. We shall be pleased to forward the relevant portions of multi-subscription cheques to the SMPS or the Chile Group for overseas members.

We regret we cannot accept dollar cheques for subscriptions because each cheque costs a minimum of £5/$8 to negotiate.

Back issues are available to members at 75p/$1.50 each, although Volumes 1 and 2 are sold out. Non-members may request a sample copy for 75p/$1.50 post paid. Requests for back issues should be sent the the Editor, to whom cheques should be made payable. Payments must be made in sterling or in dollar bills.

The group leader is Richard Saundry, Gwrych Cottage, Godstone Road, Bletchingley, Redhill, Surrey RH1 4PL, England. Phone 01883 742186.

The group does not run a packet. The SMPS Packet Secretary is Brian Sylvester, 3 Russell Court, St Lukes Road, Maidenhead, Berkshire SL6 7AP, England. Phone 01628 784555.

Although most packets are of a general nature, there are occasional specialised one country packets. Good and unusual material is always wanted.

Owing to insurance difficulties, the packet is not available to overseas members, although we shall be pleased to accept material for inclusion from them.

The auctioneer of the SMPS is Brian Moorhouse, to whom Auction and Private Treaty lots should be sent. Brian is a dealer, and will include your name on his mailing list if requested to do so.

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Editor: Michael P. Birks, 36 Trevor Road, Flixton, Manchester M41 5QH. England. 0161 747 5924.

Vol.IV, No. 73 **October 1998**

EDITORIAL

The end of another year rapidly approaches and with it the inevitable subscription renewal form. Once again we invite you to join us for another year and welcome your comments. If we can do anything to improve our journal we will certainly try but I must add that the range of subjects covered in this journal is an exact reflection of the articles submitted and I would welcome more contributions from our readers. Sadly some Republics are much under represented.

My Nicaraguan fiscal booklet is now completed (although I have heard this week of some more cinderellas), and since I have produced it purely for my own benefit as a guide to what I believe is out there and it will inevitably contain many errors, there is no charge for it. However postage in the form of 31p in England or US$1 elsewhere would be appreciated.

I have taken the plunge and I have booked a two and a half week tour of Nicaragua, which I have wanted to do since I started collecting this country in 1976. If you are interested write to "Explore Worldwide Ltd, 1 Frederick Street, Aldershot, Hants GU11 1LQ, England". It is about £1300 from England although you can book without flights and join in Managua yourself. I go 30 January 1999 but other dates are available. They also do trips to all the other Latin Republics.

Our away-day in York was tremendous. Not only is York Stamp Fair as good as Stampex for dealers and the venue much better, but the range of material on display was quite lovely. I showed *Nicaraguan fiscals* which I believe have never been shown anywhere before; David Hankey displayed *Latin American Airmails* which is another virtually unshown collection and spectacular in its depth of study; Doug Armitage brought more of his Gold Medal *Ecuador;* Colin Eddleston showed what must be a unique assemblage of *Peruvian ficals*; Martin Cusworth showed some lovely early *Chile* with prestamp covers, classics and proofs; Percy Bargholtz showed very rare *early sea mail* from the west coast to Europe; and Ross Towle demonstrated his CD-ROM of *Chilean Postal Stationery*, which lists and reproduces the finest examples he has been able to copy. Considering the venue and the attractions the attendance was not as good as we expected and we know there are now trains to the north of England from London as many of us get them home after the London meetings.

The next meeting is at the London International Stamp and Cover Show, Hall 2, Horticultural Halls, Greycoat Street, London, on Saturday 31 October from 10.15 a.m. to 12.15 p.m..

Finally a timely reminder, I hope, that the December meeting is also the Spanish Main Cup, and overseas entries may be colour photocopies accompanied by a précis of the exhibit. We have already received one entry from the United States and hope for many more.

mpb

For the diary:- **Saturday 31 October 1998** 10.15 a.m. - 12.15 p.m.
The London International Stamp and Cover Show, Horticultural Hall, London

Saturday 5 December 1998 10.30 a.m. - 3.30 p.m.
Spanish Main Meeting at the Union Jack Club, Sandell Street, London SE1.

ENTA AND THE FIRST DOMESTIC AIR MAIL SERVICES OF COSTA RICA

(Part 3)

by Dr RICHARD H SAUNDRY

Are most of the First Flight Covers Bogus?

At this point I have to add some comments of my own which I guess will been seen as highly contentious in certain quarters. Generally I am extremely ill at ease regarding the authenticity of any of the covers so far described (including those in my collection and those which I have seen illustrated in articles by others) which have first flight cachets where the day of the month has been inserted using a type of font larger than that used for the other letters and numbers. Reading between the lines we begin to get a distinct impression that far too many covers putatively flown these first domestic airmail flights have problems surrounding them, and we begin to "smell a rat". On the one hand there is not an insignificant number of covers that have been "got at" by having extra stamps added, and then there are far too many covers that seemingly went to destinations on dates when no flights to these places were recorded to have taken place.

If I were to stick my neck out I would have to say that I am inclined to think nearly all these covers were bogus, including also those sent at the proper rates to destinations where flights were reported going. I have two good reasons for thinking this. First it cannot have escaped the attention of anyone who has ever studied these covers that they were all addressed by the same hand. Such covers bear the corner cards either of "Jorge R. Guier, San Jose, Costa Rica", or of "Raul Gonzalez G., San Jose, Costa Rica". They are identical airmail envelopes. If first flight covers were prepared by a number of different collectors, then we might expect a variety of different types of envelopes.

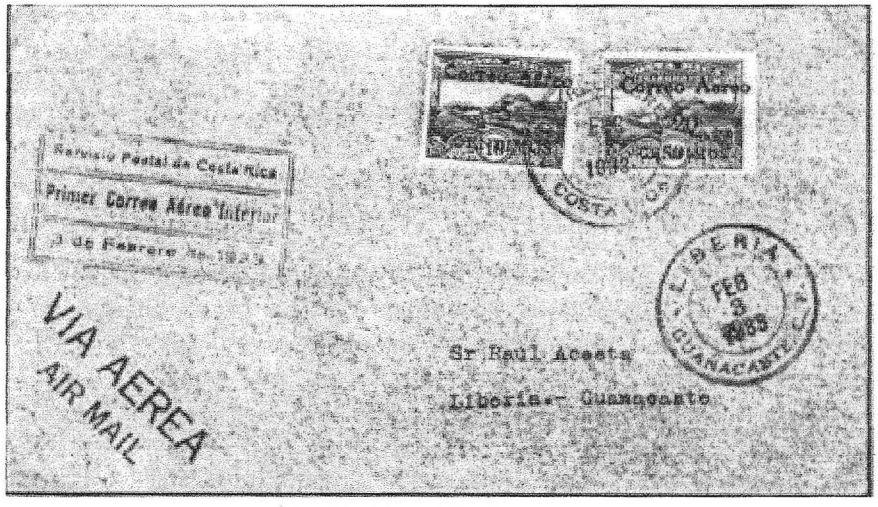


Figure 3. 1933. Firest regular internal air mail flight.

If however, only one enterprising member of the local philatelic society in San Jose prepared all the covers, not only for himself but also his mates, we would be entitled to begin to think, because of the many bogus covers that exist that perhaps more, if not all the covers were bogus. This on its own would be only an unsubstantiated suspicion of mine were it not for a further bit of evidence. I have a further first flight cover sent second flight 3rd. February to Sr. Raul Acosta in Liberia (Fig. 3).

Unlike the covers described before this solitary cover was **not** sent by the same individual who apparently sent all the others - the address is typed and a different type of airmail envelope was used . But this is the rub : the cachet is slightly different, still measuring 50 x 27 mm as before, and the wording is identical, but very importantly **the figure "3" for the day of the month "3 de Febrero de 1933" is exactly the same type of font as used for the two figures "3" in the year "1933".** All the days of the month in the cachets seen on other covers have a different size font than used for the year, they are larger and look clumsy.

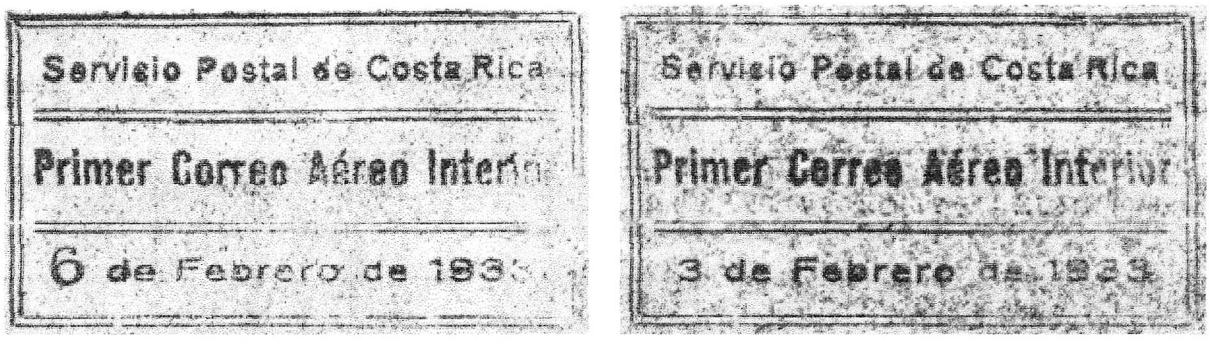

Servicio Postal de Costa Rica
Primer Correo Aéreo Interi
6 de Febrero de 193
Servicio Postal de Costa Rica
Primer Correo Aéreo Interior
3 de Febrero de 1933

Figure 4.

(Figure 4 shows identical enlargements of the cachets on the cover of 3rd. February, and one from a cover of 6th. February).

I think it only fair to ask if the Costa Rican post office could go to the lengths of supplying such a very carefully constructed cachet, why would they ever spoil the whole effect by using a different style font for the day of the month? One has to allow the possibilty that all the cachets are genuine and the San Jose post office after commencing postmarking with the small figure "3" the handstamp may have become damaged and all further postmarking was done that day, and on subsequent days using larger figures, but I think this idea too far fetched.

All this is supposition and at this distance of time the mystery is probably destined never to be solved. I really am sticking my neck out here. It is almost heresy to claim that my solitary cover is genuine and practically all the others false, but that is where my inclinations begin to take me. I have already stated my case for thinking that any competent postal authority could easily construct a similar handstamp employing movable type. Surely, if this were the case, it would not be far beyond the bounds of possibility for any individual to make a similar handstamp which could then be used to create bogus first flight covers, presumably to satisfy the needs of unsuspecting collectors who had "missed the boat" as it were.

Of course, to turn the argument on its head it would be equally possible for an unscrupulous collector to manufacture a cachet identical to that used by the Costa Rican postal authorities but to make the mistake of using identical fonts for day of the month, unlike the larger font used by the authorities. In the absence of other information we will have to bring this aspect of our studies to a halt. Do others have covers with cachets similar to that on my cover to either help confirm, or to disprove my wild theory?

HONDURAS: THE MORAZAN ISSUE

(Part 1 - The Man)

Edited and Illustrated by MICHAEL P BIRKS FRPSL

A finely engraved set bearing the portrait of Francisco Morazan made its appearance about April 1878, on a thin, hard paper and were described from proofs or specimens in the April 1878 issue of *Le Timbre Post.*

2 December 1887. The ½ centavos value in a block of four used from Tegucigalpa to Paris via New Orleans and New York. The lower left stamp is additionally tied by a light strike of the Paris receiving mark, in blue.

Francisco Morazan was born in Tegucigalpa in 1799, coming from an old French West Indian Family. On the declaration of independence from Spain in 1821, he was appointed Secretary-General by Dionisio Herrera, the first President of Honduras.

Continued on page 151

GUATEMALA: NEW DISCOVERIES ABOUT THE 5 CENTAVOS POSTHORN STATIONERY ENVELOPE

by CÉCILE CRUSON CPhH

This issue of postal stationery was summarily described in Guatemala-2. Ordered from Waterlow & Sons, London by contract of May 31, 1889, it was put on sale on or around March 1, 1890. An issuance decree has not yet been located. The description which runs as follows had been bothering me for some time:

> "EN16 5c blue, 200,000 in first printing, probably 150,000 in second printing (minus 100,000 surcharged for first 1895 provisionals, unknown amount for second 1895 provisionals, and 80,000 for 1898 provisionals)."

On the further history of this issue the handbook states that:

> "In 1892, an August 24 inventory showed 19,000 Sc envelopes and 70,500 10c envelopes on hand. An inventory of November 5, 1892, showed only one box of the 5c envelope, and an order for 15 boxes, containing 150,000, was suggested. A letter of November 17 mentions that the order had been placed, and a note of March 8, 1893, says that the first 50,000 envelopes had arrived. We have no absolute confirmation that this second order was for 150,000 and induded only the Sc, but all evidence points that way."

From the above paragraph and inventories, it appears that consumption of the 5c envelope was running at an average of at least 5,000 per month. Provided the figures are reliable, the first printing was practically exhausted by the end of 1892, i.e. in less than two years. It would therefore not be logical for a second printing of 150,000 to be sufficient to cover use for two full years let alone provide enough stock to surcharge more than 180,000 in 1895 and 1898.

Besides, as EN20, the second provisional issue of 1895 (with coat-of-arms - fig.1) is available today in far greater quantities than the earlier provisionals of that year (of which 65,000 of the 2c and 35,000 of the 6c were produced - figs.2 & 3), is was not plausible for the second issue to be in lesser quantities than the first.

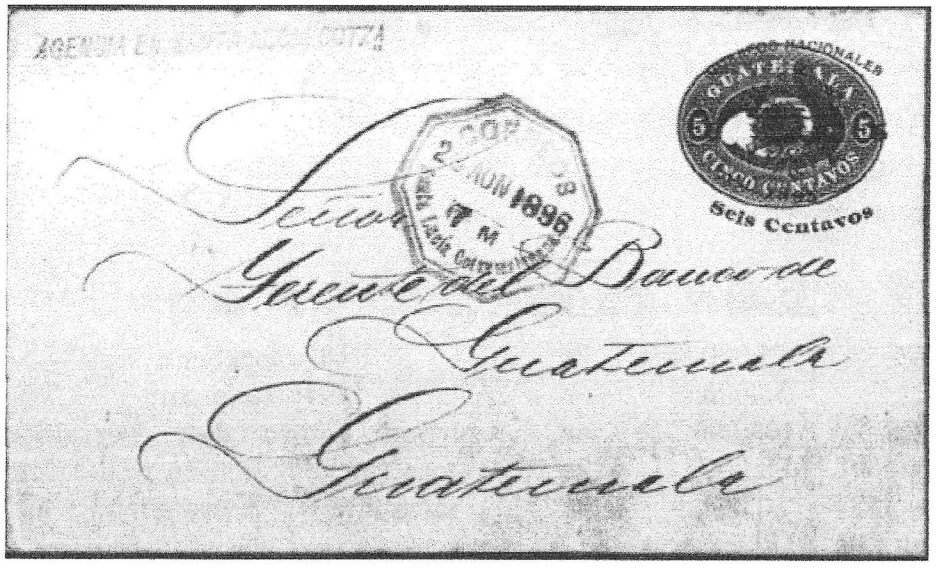


Figure 1 [80%].

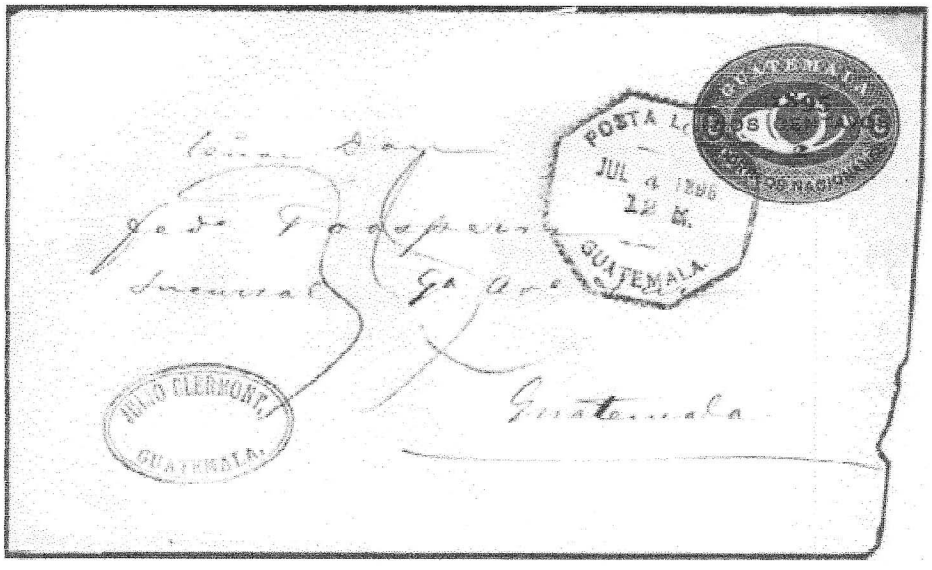
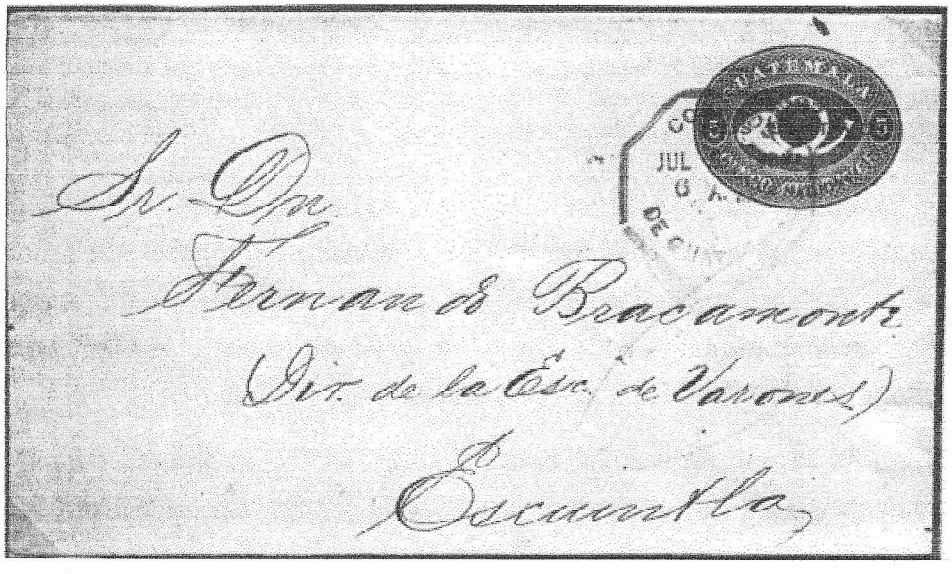


Figure 2 (above), figure 3 (below) [both 80%].



Guatemalan archives have recently provided some answers to these uncertainties. A third printing of the 5c envelope was received in 1895, amounting to 120,000. Total printing for the 5c envelope therefore appears to be **480,000** in **three** printings. The *Memoria... de Correos* (Postmaster General's annual report) for 1895 also informs on the amount surcharged for the second provisional issue of 1895, which was so far unknown, and increases by **100,000** the number of these envelopes which were surcharged.

Date	Quantity	New value	Purpose
August 1895	65,000	2c	1894 local rate
	35,000	6c	1894 interior rate
Late in 1895	**100,000**	**6c**	**earliest known date December 30, 1895**
August/October 1898	30,000	2c	local rate) first day of use October 8, 1898
August/October 1898	50,000	6c	interior rate) & two printings for both values

The only question mark remaining in my mind is: why order stationery envelopes with a face value of 5c, when the basic interior rate had already been increased to 6c by decree of January 20, 1894? Was the price of a die for the new value more expensive than the cost of surcharging envelopes for the new rate?

E-ENB

Or were the essays E-ENA and E-ENB (fig.4) depicting President Reyna Barrios possibly prepared in 1894 to replace the posthorn series, but the project given up for lack of public funds? If the answer is in the *Archivo General de Centro America,* we hope to unearth it some day. It may take time, as many publications are just heaped up on one of the eight floors of an institution lacking an appropriate budget, and housed in a building in folorn state. I was told that the modest increase in appropriation for the *Archivo* this year will be used primarily for the most urgent repairs to the building i.e. replacing the many broken window panes.

Bibliography:

R. A. Goodman, ed. *Guatemala-2* (Bournernouth, 1974)
Ubico, E. *Memoria... de Correos* (1895)

HONDURAS: THE MORAZAN ISSUE continued from page 148.

He later commanded the Honduran troops in the war against Guatemala, which Repoublic was attempting to gain a predominant position among the Central American Republics, but was defeated and captured. A few years later he was more successful, became President of Honduras, and conquered Guatemala in 1829. During his regime numerous and extensive reforms were introduced, but in 1832 he had to suppress a revolution in Salvador against the Federation.

In 1838 occurred the terrible Indian rebellion in Guatemala under Raphael Carrera; Honduras was defeated, and together with Costa Rica had to withdraw from the Federation: Guatemala became independent.

Morazan resigned the Presidency on 5 April 1840, and fled to Chile. In 1842 he made one more attempt to reinstate the Central American Federation, and managed to overthrow the Separatist Government of Costa Rica, but a counter-revolt took place, and Morazan fell into the hands of the rebels, and was shot on 15 September 1842.

The design of all values shows a profile portrait of Morazan looking to the left, in an oval: around the top of the oval are the words "REPUBLICA DE HONDURAS": the value in words appears below the portrait, and in figures in the top corners (in the 1 peso in all four corners): the design of each value differs.

To be continued

NICARAGUA: POSTAL RATES FROM 1913 - Part 8

by MICHAEL P BIRKS FRPSL

Pan-American Rates

Late in 1948 or early in 1949, but certainly by 7 March 1949 the basic letter rate increased to 15c, to which had to be added 5c stadium contruction tax and later 5c social security tax. Presumably when sufficient funds for the new stadium had been amassed other demands for this tax were considered. I would be interested to hear how this social security tax was applied or was it yet another source of funding for the President? By this time Canada was included in the Pan-American rates and was no longer treated as an overseas destination.

Figure 1. 12 April 1957. Puerto Cabezas to Canada franked 15c + 5c social security tax

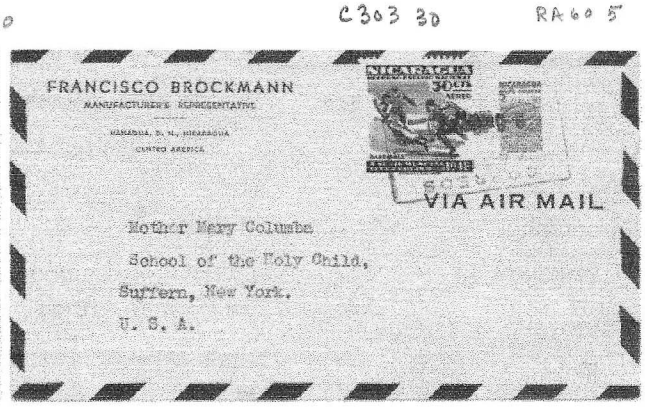


Figure 2. 26 May 1951. Managua to the USA franked 30c postage + 5c stadium tax

At the same time a major change took place in the way that air mail postal rates were calculated. Up to this point air mail charges were in addition to the surface postage but now we find an inclusive air mail charge. The Pan-American postage rate became 30c per 5g and in effect this meant a reduction for letters of 10c.

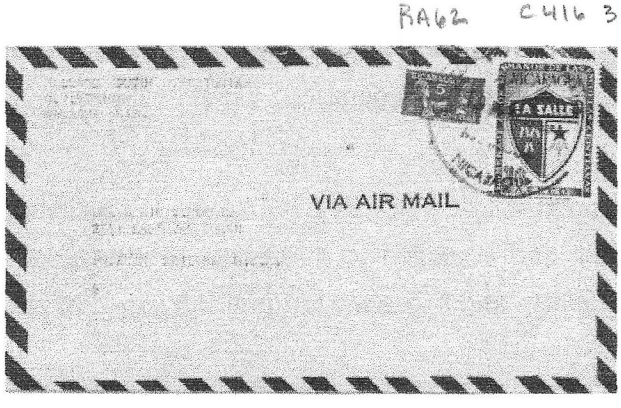


Figure 3. 19 March 1959. Managua to the USA franked 30c postage plus 5c tax.

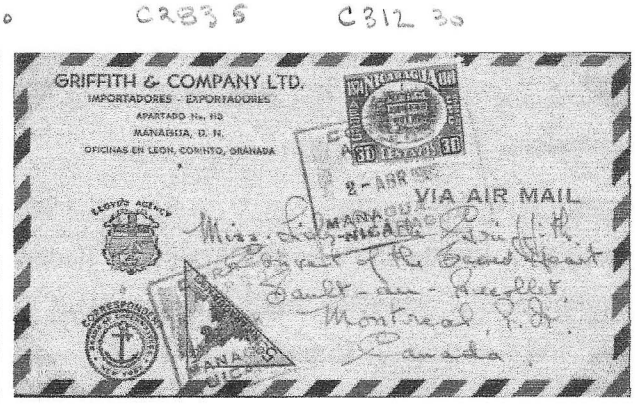


Figure 4. 2 April 1952. Managua to Canada franked 30c postage plus 5c tax.

Could this slight reduction have any connection with the cancelling of the contract with TACA and the take over of the routes by LANICA?

Registration at this time was 20c which increased to 40c later in this rating period. Figures 5 shows the registration fee at 20c and 6 show a 40c registration fee. I am unable to pin-point the date of change any more accurately than "between 17 September 1951 and 28 April 1956"!

C304 x2 40 RA60

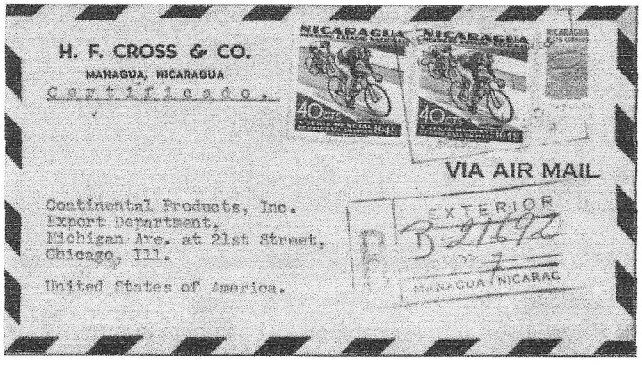


Figure 5. 17 September 1951. Managua to the USA franked 85c; 2 x 30c airmail (7g) plus 20c reg plus 5c tax.

C367 30

C383 40

RA62

Figure 6. 21 August 1957. Managua to the USA franked 75c; 30c airmail plus 40c reg plus 5c tax.

Covers to Panama and Guatemala show a 25c rate with a 5c obligatory tax. I cannot, at this time, say whether or not this rate extended to other Central American countries.

C342 30

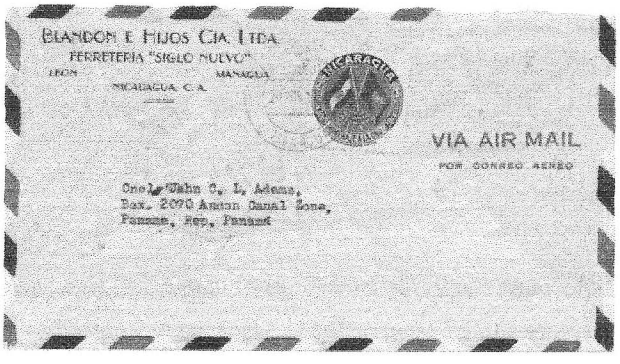


Figure 7. 20 August 1954. Managua to Panama. A sinlge rate air mail cover franked 30c to include 5c tax.

RA60 622? x3 25

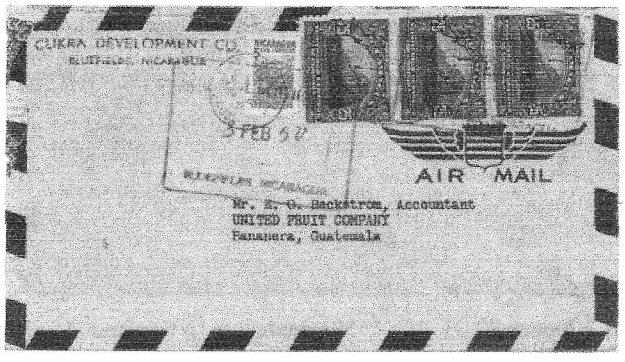


Figure 8. 3 February 1950. Bluefileds to Guatemala. A triple rate air mail cover franked 75c plus 5c tax.

Overseas Rate

RA61 C336 85

Figure 9. 4 February 1954. Corinto to Germany. A single rate air mail cover franked 85c plus 5c tax.

RA62 C352 x2 1 cov

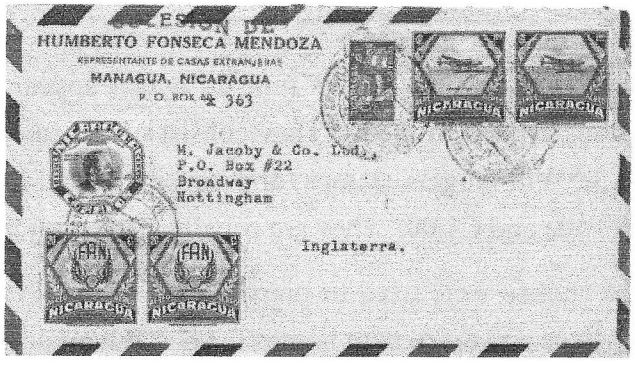


Figure 10. 29 July 1955. Managua to England. A triple rate air mail cover franked C2.55 plus 5c tax.

748 15
C348 x2 20

The overseas rate was significantly increased to 85c per 5g, again inclusive of postage. Unfortunately I have no surface covers for this rate period.

C312 30 C262 60 72210 C311 25 7215

Figure 11. 18 September 1952. Managua to Scotland. Both sides of the same cover.
A single rate registered cover, franked C1.30, made up of 85c postage, 40c registration and 5c obligatory tax.

Figures 11 to 13 show the registration fee of 40c which was not increased when the Pan-American registration fee was doubled to 40c. The fee is uniform for the first time.

C274 1.00 x2 RA605 659? 10 C271 2.50 C266 20 C270 1.00 C269 90

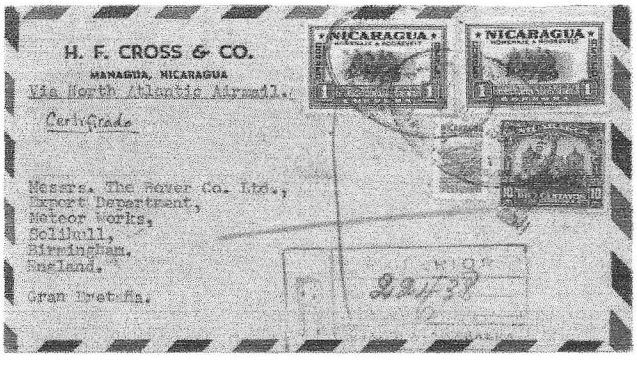
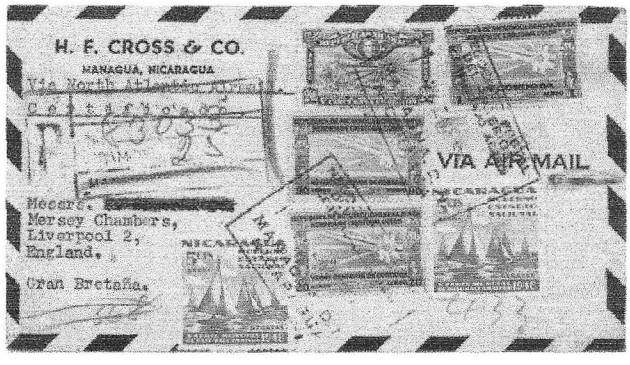


Figure 12. 1 July 1950. Managua to England.
Registered 6g - double rate.
Franked C2.15; C1.70 postage plus 40c reg plus 5c tax.



C300 1 x2

Figure 13. 27 January 1953. Managua to England.
Registered 25g - quintuple rate.
Franked C4.70; C4.25 postage plus 40c reg plus 5c tax.

A single cover in my possession suggests an increase to 60c for registration around the time the Pan-American registration increased but it is by no means certain.

Semana de Communicaciones

From time to time covers turn up which appear to have Telegraph stamps affixed to them. They consist of the surcharge, shown right, on 3c Will Rogers stamps, and consist of six values; 5c, 10c, 15c, 25c, 50c and C1.00. They are usually affixed on the back.

Timbre Telegrafico
Semana de
Communicaciones
Vale 10 cents.

The stamps were used to prepay a tax on mail (telegrams and telephone bills) to raise funds for pensions and retirement homes for postal workers. The tax, at the rate of 100% of the postage, was not applied to the postal tax.

The origin of the tax goes back to 1934 when a legislative decree declared 12 November of 1934 and subsequent years, "Day of the Communications Worker". It was not, however, until 1945 that this day was turned into a week, the first week in December. After 1945 the week was the second week in November.

From 1946 to 1953 no special stamps were provided for this purpose, the tax being collected by the addition of ordinary stamps, although as yet, I have not seen any examples. I would imagine that double postage would be an incentive to post your letter earlier or later.

The 3c Will Rogers stamps appeared in 1954, all surcharged in black, with a further printing of the 15c in red in 1959.

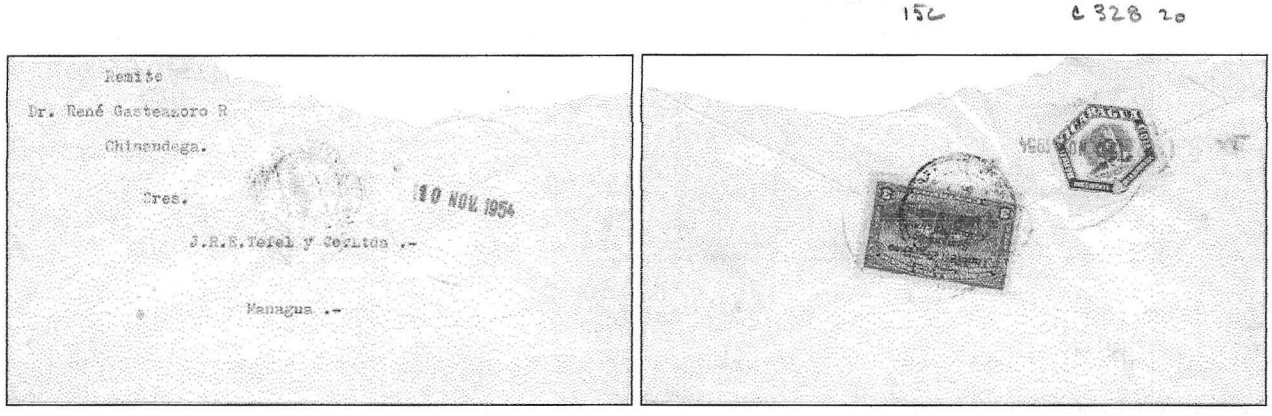


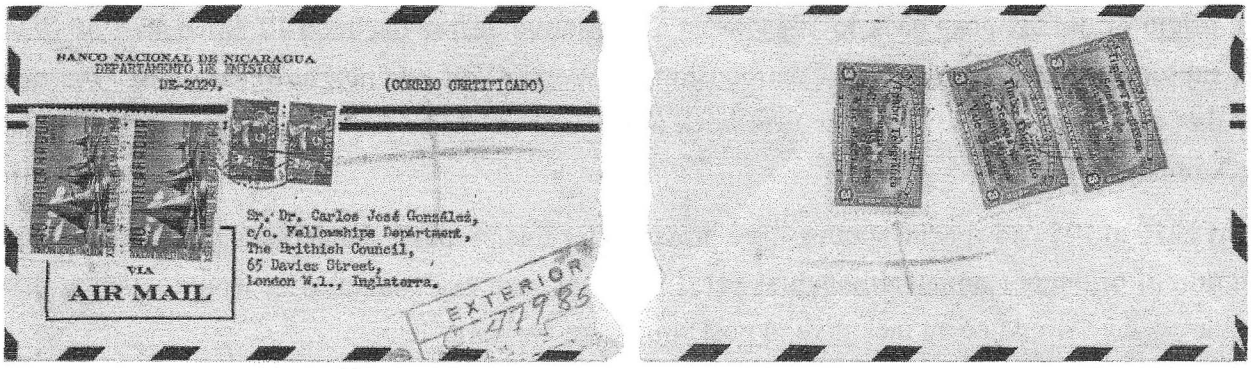
Figure 14. 10 November 1954. A letter from Chinandega to Managua franked 20c and 15c "Semana de Communicaciones". This means that 5c of the postage stamp is for the current obligatory tax (baseball stadium).

Figure 15. 11 November 1954. An airmail letter from La Luz to Managua, franked 25c (internal airmail rate) with 25c "Semana de Communicaciones" affixed.

In 1962 the 5c was overpinted A in red, the 10c B in olive, the 25c C in green and the 50c D in black to make identification of the values easier.

A new surcharge appeared in 1964, identified primarily by the replacement of "Telegrafico" with "Telegraficos". All six values were surcharged in red. In 1965 5c, 10c and 15c values appeared with the numerals in a larger font, again in red.

In 1966 all six values appeared on 3c Junior Chamber of Commerce in the same seriffed font. Two years later the 2c value of the same set was surcharged in taller sans-serif letters, again producing all six values.



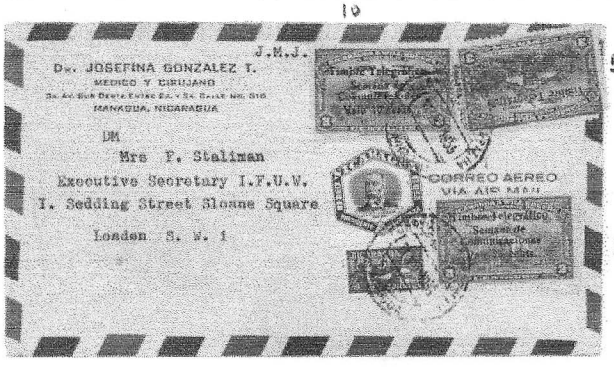
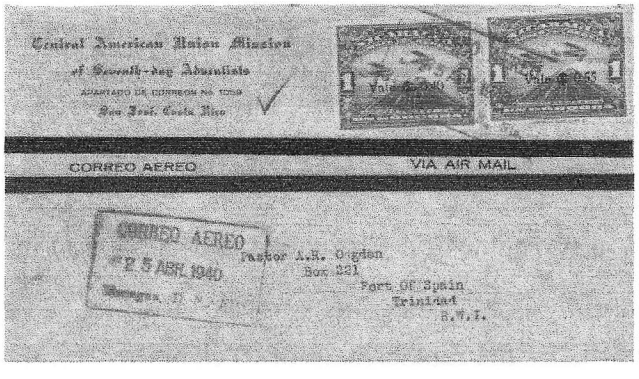


Fig 16 (top). November 1955. An official registered cover from Managua to England, franked with 80c in postage stamps and 10c obligatory tax. On the reverse is a further 85c in S. de C. stamps confirming the postage rate at 85c plus 5c obligatory tax. As usual with official covers there is no franking for the registration.

Fig 17 (left). 11 November 1955. This cover from Managua to London is unusual in having the S. de C. stamps on the front. Franked 85c postage, 85c S. de C. and 5c obligatory tax.

It has been reported[1] that a boxed marking reading SEMANA/DE/COMMUNICACIONES was used on the 1971 Peace issue. The following year the earthquake struck Managua and the tax appears to disappear at this point.

It is noticeable from these illustrations that of the four S de C covers I have, three are very roughly opened and despite this I still keep them. These covers are not common in my experience and whatever the condition are sufficiently scarce to justify keeping. These covers were all purchased from dealers who believed they were telegraph stamps being used for postage. I did not enlighten them as to the true usage of these stamps since should any more come their way the prices would reflect their true status. It is not in my interest to educate the dealers from whom I buy.



I am indebted to Ian McQueen (of jusqu'a fame) for the donation of the cover (figure 18, above left), which he says belongs in my collection rather than his, and who am I to argue! This is the only cover to the British West Indies I have seen and confirms this as an "overseas" destination with an airmail charge of 65c per 5g at this time (1940). British Guiana was the same rate (fig 19).

[1] *Nicarao,* Volume III, #1, October 1992, "Semana de Communicaciones Postal Tax" by Aldo Knoepffler